Α Νανάθιν Αντφλον Κεκαλοδικό Φορουμ Χρη
Σκληρες, Αρα
διδακτήν η
αιρετή; η ού
διδακτήν ἀλλ' άσκητον; η οὔτε
άσκητον οὔτε
μαθητόν, ἄλλα
ϕύσει
παραγίνεται
τοις ἄνθρωποις
ἡ ἄλλῳ τινὶ
tρόπῳ
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Ideology and Gender in Angela Carter’s ‘The Passion of New Eve’

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Abstract
Looking into the issue of gender in literary works, women are usually depicted as traditional stereotypes of women as nurturing, passive and submissive. The idea of women who may be violent was seen as inadequate due to the difficulty which society as a whole as well as academic discipline have, in seeing violence or aggression, even anger, as part of the female character. There exist two sexes and two genders and between them there is a set of rather obvious correspondences. The assertion that gender is not determined by sex has simply reinforced a division between the biological and the social in a way which leaves our understanding of biological sex fairly intact. Angela Carter stresses the performative and surface nature of gender identity and she does so by dealing with the question of bodily and sexual transformation at several different levels.

Keywords: gender, active, passive, feminine, violence

1. Introduction
The novel of Angela Carter, first published in 1977, thematizes feminist rebellion that reflects the influence of feminism. Distinct from the Victorian novels like *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* of Thomas Hardy, first published in 1891, her rebellious heroines form a novel of transition. The violent actions of women such as women expressing anger, women acting with violence and women claiming physical power in a man’s world made a complete break with the social conventions of the Victorian period in which books challenging the sexual mores were usually censored or appeared in serialised version. The second feminist movement 1960s-1980s provided women with the goal to express their unhappiness towards their unequal status as well as break free from men’s power of patriarchy. So, Angela Carter broke free of the restraints of novelistic conventions as well as of gender stereotypes which underlined the 19th century literature and wrote a novel with shattered gender definitions as well as confused ideas about femininity and masculinity. Her novel represents the woman who aggressively fights back against man’s power and mistreatment of both her body and soul.

*The Passion of New Eve* focuses on women’s power over men, specifically being agents of sexual aggression. So, why does Angela Carter choose for her writing to represent violent women? Traditionally, when exploring violence in literature, most feminist criticism would focus on male violation over women with women usually being the victim of male’s aggression as the latter were usually depicted as the agents of force like in one of the most famous episodes in Victorian Tess of the D’Urbervilles (extract 1)¹. What strikes the reader’s attention is the domineering orders that the man gives to the woman. Demanding goods-and-services is often realized through the use of imperatives which reinforce the ideology of gender.

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2. Catharsis

Literature does not give much emotional catharsis for women as they are not represented as those who fight back men’s violence but are usually represented as victims. However, Angela Carter’s work in the 1970’s shows women who aggressively fight back thus taking a position against the general claim that violence exclusively emanated from a male source. By putting forward affirmative representations of sexually violent women, *The passion of New Eve* deliberately critiques what was the dominant Anglo-American feminist dichotomy of male aggressors and female victims. (Bristow J, et al 1997: 150) She engages with feminine debate of the time thus proving that the alternative of a woman being violent, thus active, exists and contradicts the passive stereotype of the victimized woman. In the 1970’s Angela Carter took the initiative to show the thrill of women’s sexual aggression.

3. Functional Interpersonal Analysis

A number of systemic-functional linguists have developed techniques for the analysis of ideology, as has Cate Poynton:
‘Ideology deals in evaluation, probably always in relation to binary oppositions such as female/male, capitalism/socialism, war/peace.’ (Poynton C, 1989: 11)
This power configuration expresses the reality of society, as everything is characterised by patterns of control. As these oppositions and evaluations are considered to constitute the ideology of gender, they should be expressed in language and more specifically in the following grammatical transitivity system introduced by linguist M.A.K Halliday (Halliday M.A.K 1999.)

![Diagram of transitivity system](image)

The system of Transitivity divides verbs into five categories:
a) Material: they can be either transitive or intransitive and they show qualities for both men and women, while they help to distinguish their power relations.
b) Mental: According to the binary oppositions in the ideology of gender, verbs of a mental process like think or know are mostly associated to males as they have to do with reason whereas love which has to do with emotion is associated with women.
c) Relational: These are useful in classifying or identifying men and women according to the binary oppositions set by Cate Poynton.
d) Verbal: These verbs of speaking, mostly reinforce the binary opposition action/speech as they can assess whether the type of verb is associated with men or women.
e) Behavioural: These verbs of physical action that imply some mental activity, when it comes to the ideological representation of gender, are mostly associated with women. The reason for this is because these verbs are linked to the expressive and emotional poles which according to the cryprotype of gender, are assigned to women.

4. Binary Oppositions

Another aspect of the interpersonal metafunction, is the use of chain words as they enhance the concept of binary oppositions. Tone reveals the attitude the writer has toward a subject. Word choice allows a writer to vary the way the audience understands and responds to the feelings the writer incorporates in the passage. When analyzing words you are analyzing through the writing, the way you would conceive a speaker’s voice. In analysing the ideological representation of gender, the vocabulary is important as it reveals the attitude of the speaker. For example, a man may use words to characterize a woman with negative connotations thus proving his high status which gives him the right to see a woman as inferior.

From the earlier scenes in the book The Passion of New Eve, Angela Carter shows the man’s violence over the woman so as later on to bring the catharsis to the female reader, showing the woman fighting back thus punishing the man who has violated not only physically but also orally the woman’s idea of feminine self and personality. Evelyn wants to abandon Leilah after he finds out that she is pregnant, thus showing her his powerful side by rejecting her both as a person and as a future wife (extract 2).

This binary opposition is very much reinforced by the superior/subordinate word chain:

- Superior (Evelyn): contempt, hypocrites, hypocrisy of love, siege
- Subordinate (Leilah): the thing limp, passive obedient

Significantly, the words the thing, limp, passive and obedient are associated with Leilah as this is what she became after Evelyn’s hypocrisy and siege of her body and soul. The mental process wish having as Sensor the word I thus meaning Evelyn, shows the fact that from the moment he met Leilah he wanted to hurt her and make her seem as if she is his power’s victim. This is also reinforced by the use of the modal verb could. As Halliday said (Halliday, 1999: 359) the modal verb could can express ability/potentiality although this is on the fringe of the modality system. So, it expresses Evelyn’s wish for the potentiality to make Leilah obedient to his masculine powers. So, as it seems modality reflects the ideology of gender in the text.

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5. Transitivity/Functional Analysis

After Evelyn abandons Leilah, he drives to a place where he is captured by a group of women and brought to Beulah where he is physically as well as sexually violated by a woman called Mother. He suffers the same humiliation he forced upon Leilah. From this point on, Angela Carter shows the woman fighting back and the consequences that this aggression has on a man’s body and soul. So, the catharsis for the female reader comes. Mother rapes Evelyn so as to humiliate him in the same way he did with Leilah (extract 3).

If the Material processes which are related to this sexual interaction are taken into consideration, it comes as clear that Mother is the active participant whereas Evelyn is the passive one.

Mother (Actor): performed, grasped, clasped
Evelyn (Eve): expelled, I, me, felt

Out of these processes, three are related to Mother having either her or her body part as Actor thus proving that she is the active participant. The fact that Evelyn is the Actor of the two processes, the Goal to the most important material ones to do with his rape as well as the Senser of the only Mental process (felt) which exists in this extract, constitutes him as the passive one of this sexual interaction. So, the processes reinforce the binary opposition active/passive but this time attributing the value term active to the woman and passive to the man.

Moreover, the binary opposition female pleasure/male humiliation reinforces the fact that the woman rapes Evelyn, because she wants to feel the pleasure of taking revenge for the humiliation he caused to another woman.

The word chain deriving from the same binary opposition shows that Mother wanted to make Evelyn see what the word humiliation means.

Mother (Actor): the vigour of the female mantis
Evelyn (Goal): raped, very little pleasure, brisk friction, engulfment, expelled me

Another important process in the extract to challenge the ideological representation of women is the Behavioural one watched. The fact that Behaver to this behavioural process is the word she, is important to show that the person who does the watching is a woman. So, Evelyn becomes the victim of a woman’s gaze. She defines his masculinity at the same way he had defined Leilah’s femininity. Mother turns him into an object of her desire. She rapes him for her own megalomaniac satisfaction and revenge.

However, the most important scene in the book in which the woman’s power over man is shown when Mother castrates Evelyn, thus turning into his other self, Eve (extract 4).

Mother (Actor): raising, brought down, cut off, caught, tossed, excised
Evelyn (Goal): all my genital appendages, them, me

Six processes have Mother as Actor thus again acting as the active participant. Her actions are all transitive and they affect both Evelyn and his genitals. This scene explores one of the most important issues for Angela Carter’s ideological representation of gender; the fact that the biological differences between men and women are not

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important in the construction of one’s gender identity. When Mother asks Evelyn how he feels after the operation, he says:

‘I don’t find myself at all’ (Carter, 1996:75)

This proves that gender identities are a deception as they are imaginary rather than fixed. Just because Evelyn was transformed into a woman does not mean that he accepts it emotionally. Inside him, he still feels a man.

After Evelyn manages to escape from Mother’s capture he drove on until he was captured by a man called Zero. In his hand Evelyn (now called Eve) will suffer her worst nightmare, that of sexual violation. Even if this means that the reader is taken back to the idea of a man being the powerful one over a woman’s body, this is not the case. All the violation that Eve will suffer from a man is a result of a woman’s aggression fighting back. Evelyn was transformed into a woman by a woman and now was set out in the world to experience what he had done to Leilah and to other women as well. So, when the reader sees Eve (Evelyn) being sexually violated by Zero, is satisfied by his humiliation (extract 5).

Zero (Actor): hung, were arranged, plumped, permitted, steal, seat, cover, had raped, did not like, flagellated, boasted, slept, stretched, pleased, told, unfastened, brought out, hurled, entered, assaulted, peered up

Evelyn (Goal): shivered, me, I, upon me, at me, still, thing, shook, being screwed, afraid, would die, cry, pain

Considering the processes, 21 have Zero or he as Actor implying the man, whereas only 13 have the word I as Goal implying the woman. So, it is obvious that Zero is the active participant of their sexual interaction. This is also emphasised by the binary opposition active/passive which according to Poynton the active value terms are associated with the male while the passive ones with the woman.

It is also worth looking at the word chain derived from the aforementioned binary opposition:

master, still, weapon, cry, sense, mind, rape, overwhelmed, afraid, furious, exertions.

The words which are related to power and action such as master, weapon, rape, furious, are all words that have to do with what the man is doing, whereas words such as still, cry, afraid, overwhelmed as related to Eve (Evelyn) represent her feelings and the fact that she does not have the power to react to Zero’s mistreating.

6. Sociology and Gender

Michel Foucault, exploring the world of the ancient Greeks brings out another sign of sexuality that of the relationships in terms of one’s power over the other. He called that, the principle of isomorphism between sexual relations. In the case of a sexual relationship between two adolescent men, pleasure practices were conceived in terms of assuming a polarity that opposed activity and passivity. It is obvious that this extract has to do with heterosexual intercourse but it would be interesting to connect it with Foucault’s theory so as to analyze the ideology of genders. So, according to Foucault’s
ideas, the partners were given roles analogous to the field of social rivalries and hierarchies. Nobody approved of passivity but on the contrary they honored activity. So, Zero should be honored by women as he is the active one. So, men are seen as more powerful and more worth-honoring. Throughout the whole text, which is focused on the sexual intercourse between Zero and Eve, these signs of Foucault’s theory of sexuality are obvious. First of all, we see Zero and Eve having a sexual kind of intercourse.

“he entered me like the vandals entering Rome”
“he attacked me until I thought I would die of it”. (Carter, 1999: 91)

Another sign to show Zero’s power over Eve (Evelyn), is metaphor. The sentence ‘he entered me like the vandals entering Rome’ (Carter, 1996: 91) is given a metaphorical interpretation as ‘the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.’ (Lakoff J and Johnson, 1980: 5)

Eve presents her sexual experience by referring to the attack of Rome by the vandals. In this way she emphasises the horror of this experience and even the fact that after her sexual attack what remained was remnants. In Rome, the disasters were both material and corporal and likewise Eve talks about the remnants of her body but mostly of her soul. So, in the extract, the concept of rape is metaphorically structured and talked about in terms of a historical event. The images of the horror of her body and soul being subjected into, are condensed into one single semi-sentence:

‘Like the vandals attacking Rome.’ (Carter, 1999: 91)

Zero sexually violates Eve several times and this is done because Angela Carter wants to emphasise the fact that a man is being punished for what he did to women (extract 6).

7. Finalising

The way Angela Carter shows the effect of a patriarchal culture on women and the roles available to them as being that of sexual violation. There are roles that in a patriarchal society are reserved for women. However, the question is on how different the reaction of these women towards sexual harassment or violence is. The issue challenges the ideological representation of women in the 1970’s. When Leilah is sexually violated by Evelyn, she does not seem to take any action so as to prove that she is in a way strong under Evelyn’s patriarchy. Instead, she puts her mother, who at the end of the book turns out to be Mother, to take the appropriate action against the man who sexually violated her. Mother takes drastic action by castrating Evelyn. So, Angela Carter treats the theme of female community. Evelyn’s mother is being assigned the role of rescuer of Leilah who has been sexually violated, thus Angela Carter challenging the stereotype of femininity. When the war of the sexes begun in 1913-1914 women were not alone in this and could as well as can rely on other women’s help who would be willing to punish the man who hurt not only the victim’s but the woman’s nature in general. The risk of depriving her heroine off autonomy thus reducing her to a state of helpless victim is not run in The Passion of New Eve, since the issue of sexuality presented has been reinforced as years go by, due to political, cultural as well as social changes that people have to consider and walk parallel with them.

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Extract 1

‘Don’t touch my arm! We shall be thrown out if you do!
Hold on round my waist!’
She grasped his waist, and so they reached the bottom.
‘Safe, thank God, in spite of your fooling!’ said she, her face on fire.
‘Tess-fie! That’s temper!’ said d’Urberville.
‘Tis truth.’
‘Well, you need not let go your hold of me so thanklessly the moment you feel yourself out of danger.’
She had not considered what she had been doing; whether he were man or woman, stick or stone, in her involuntary hold on him. Recovering her reverse she sat without replying and thus they reached the summit of another declivity.
‘Now then, again!’ said d’Urberville.
‘No, no! said Tess. ’Show more sense, do, please.’
‘Now then, put your arms round my waist again, as you did before, my Beauty.’
‘Never!’ said Tess independently, holding on as well as she could without touching him.
‘Let me put one little kiss on those holmberry lips, Tess……..’
‘Oh, I don’t know-very well; I don’t mind!’ she panted miserably.

Extract 2

I told her firmly that she could not marry me and she must have an abortion. She sprang at me from the bed and tried to scratch out my eyes with her poor fingernails on which the purple enamel was now pitifully chipped. But I caught her wrists easily and held her down and reminded her she was only seventeen and very beautiful, that the world must contain a great deal more for such an enchanting person as herself than a penniless young Englishman who had not even got a job. I was a perfect, sanctimonious hypocrite. Nothing was too low for me to stoop to if it meant I could get rid of her.
I capitalised on the few books and possessions I kept at the Lower East Side apartment and gave the proceeds to her. I also gave her what little of the money I had left from the sum I originally brought with me but I did not tell her about the cheque my parents and sent me since now I had set my heart on the trip and did not want to jeopardise it in any way.
And, although all I told her was true, far more true than I wished to believe, because to acknowledge she was indeed just as beautiful and brilliant as I told her she was would have wounded my own vanity too severely, still, even then, I could pretend that I did not see her contempt in the face that now shut up all its dark petals against me.
When she came to herself, in the sullen convalescence from her hysteria, she did not turn against me. No; she became indifferent to me, though aqiescently so. I ceased to have any significance for her, and, in spite of myself, I was piqued. My irresponsible vanity, was a little dinted. And, in my heart, I knew it was my own weakness, my own exhaustion that she had, in some sense, divined and reflected for me that had made her so attractive to me. She was a perfect woman;
like the moon, she only gave reflected light. She had mimicked me, she had become the thing I wanted of her, so that she could make me love her because I myself was so unlovable.

So, hypocrites that we were, we spared ourselves the final hypocrisy of love. Or, I saved myself from that most brutal of all assaults, the siege of the other.

Now Leilah became as limp, passive and obedient as I could wish.

**Extract 3**


So I was unceremoniously raped; and it was the last time I performed the sexual act as a man, whatever that means, though I took very little pleasure from it. None at all, in fact, for her thighs grasped me with the vigour of the female mantis and I felt only engulfment, followed by a few seconds brisk friction. Then came a great bellow that signalled a gratification with which I myself had had very little to do and she clasped her muscles together and expelled me...

**Extract 4**


Raising her knife, she brought it down. She cut off all my genital appendages with a single blow, caught her in her other hand and tossed them to Sophia, who slipped them into the pocket of her shorts. So, she excised everything I had been and left me, instead, with a wound that would, in future, bleed once a month, at the bidding of the moon.

**Extract 5**


Now I was alone with Zero. He hung his whip from a nail on the bare boards of a wall on which his guns were arranged in attractive patterns, then plumped himself down on his swivelling chair of black Italian leather— for he permitted himself every luxury he could steal— and motioned me brusquely to seat myself cross-legged on the floor, which was spread with a sumptuous carpet, inch-thick and deep crimson in colour, although very dirty and fouled with dog turds. I fastidiously did as I was bid and attempted to cover myself with my abundant hair for he had already raped me once that night and I did not like the way he flagellated me with the unique lash of his regard. His dog, a lurcher, that like its master, boasted only the one eye but balls the size of grapefruit, rose up from the luxurious basket in which it slept underneath his desk, stretched itself and approached me in order to subject me to an ordeal by sniffing. Its cold, twitching nose insinuated itself inside my navel and under my arms, so that I shivered but when I tried to move away, Zero took up the rifle propped against his desk, clicked back the safety catch and pointed it at me. After that, I kept as he pleased. He called his lurcher Cain; it was the one thing Zero loved, besides the sterility of the desert.

I did not trust myself to speak, I shook my head. He appeared to believe me, nodded, told me to lie down on the floor regardless of the excrement which littered it, unfastened his fly, brought out a weapon which I now saw was of amazing size and, with a wild cry, hurled himself upon me; he entered me like the vandals attacking Rome. I felt a sense of grateful detachment from this degradation; I registered in my mind only the poignant fact of my second rape in two hours. ‘Poor Eve! She’s being screwed again!’ The first time he assaulted me, I had been too overwhelmed by the horror of it to notice what he did with his wooden leg during intercourse; he merely let it lie beside him, like an extra but inert number, it only came into play during his perversions.

As Zero’s passion for me ran its course, it did not grow less but it grew bewildered. Something in me rang false; he knew it by atavistic intuition. One Sunday night, after he brusquely ordered me to undress, he took it into his head to examine me with almost a jeweller’s eye; he could have
been inspecting a diamond he feared might be flawed. He made me stand on the desk and poked the barrel of a rifle in my ribs to make me turn round and round.

It was this perfection of physical beauty that puzzled Zero, even scared him, so that now, to master his fear, he attacked me until I thought I would die of it, so furious were his exertions, while the girls in hell outside his bed groaned so loudly I was sure he could hear them, too, and I began to cry, to drown the noise they were making and spare them a beating.

No, I'm lying, I cried because of the pain he caused me; me renewed eyes seemed to have made me of water, since often they would leak.

**Extract 6**


But Zero forestalled me. The whip cracked and the lash coiled round my ankle, bringing me to the floor. I was dragged back to the bed, protesting, and Marijane and Sadie prepared me for the sacrifice. They grasped my arms firmly while Betty Boop and Emmeline took hold each one of my ankles and spread my legs wide, so that the moist, crimson velvet with which I had been so scrupulously lined was exhibited to them all like meat. Now all bayed for Tristessa to mount me.

Tiny and Apple Pie had grasped his arms, though he showed no signs of running away herself; he was too dazed. At a sign from Zero, who sat lording it on the lid of James Dean’s coffin with his bearskin wrapped around him like a Highlander’s plaid, Betty Louella dropped to her knees before Tristessa and applied her intelligent mouth to the cock that seemed to them such a significantly male appendage. At that wet touch, Tristessa started and cried out.

To the East, three times a minute, I saw a brightening of the sky that hinted the sun was about to rise. Tristessa stared down in amazement at the erection Betty Louella had produced for him. But still he kept perfectly silent; still he said nothing while they jeered, and Tiny and Apple Pie led him to the bed on which I lay, Zero gave him a great kick in the arse so that, taken by surprise, he lost balance and toppled on top of me so unexpectedly he shook all the breath out of me. The glass bed was cold, hard and exposed as the mountain top on which Abraham presented Isaac with his knife. Now Tristessa, who lay upon me, raised himself upon his arms and gazed into my face.

Again, the dark light of his eyes. He spoke; that rustling whisper, the dead leaves of his voice.

“I thought”, he said, “I was immune to rape. I thought that I had become inviolable, like glass, and could only be broke. “I felt his cock pressing against my upper thigh; it was quite stiff.

“Passivity,” he said. “Inaction. That time should act upon me, that I should not die. So I was seduced by the notion of a woman’s being, which is negativity. Passivity, the absence of being. To be everything and nothing. To be a pane the sun shines through.”

Then the sun broke free of the horizon through with a single shaft of brilliance. I was tired of waiting. I clasped my legs about him and drew him into me. He came immediately, amidst the roars of vile applause, and withdrew in almost the same motion. He tumbled out on to the floor, uttering great cries, while I writhed on the hard bed.

**Bibliography**

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